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Internal Layout Checklist for Universal Design Homes

**Screen-reader accessible format:** In addition to minimum accessibility features, automatic numbering has been replaced with manual numbering, bullet points have been replaced with an asterisk, decorative images and logos have been removed, other images have been replaced with a description of the image and manual page numbers have been inserted at the top of each page.

May 2025[page 2]

# Introduction

Housing in Ireland needs to be designed and future-proofed, so that it can accommodate the diverse needs of our current and future population. In Census 2022, a total of 1,109,557 people reported experiencing at least one long-lasting condition or difficulty to any extent, accounting for 22% of the population. Ireland’s population is ageing. In 2022 there were 768,900 people aged 65 and over living here, an increase of 35% from 2013. By 2051 the population of older people is projected to increase to 1.6 million. In the coming years, there will be greater demands for accessible, age-friendly, Universal Design Homes, to respond to our changing demographics. This checklist is a summary of guidelines from the [Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland](https://www.universaldesign.ie/built-environment/housing/) that impact on the internal layout of dwellings.

Several city and county development plans contain objectives for the provision of Universal Design Homes in both the private and social housing sectors. The checklist is provided as a tool for designers to ensure that Universal Design is considered at the early stages of housing design.

# Scope of this Checklist

The scope of this checklist is limited to the internal layout of an individual apartment or house only. The location and design of the approach to a dwelling, including the common areas of apartment buildings, are also key elements of Universal Design Homes, but are not within the scope of this checklist. For example, a Universal Design Home should be well-connected to local amenities, ideally located within walking distance to shops and services, and near to public transport links. Refer to the [Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland](http://universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Housing/) for a complete set of guidelines. Further information on Age Friendly Homes is also set out in the publication ‘[Ten Universal Design Features to include in a Lifetime Adaptable and Age Friendly Home](https://agefriendlyhomes.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/AFI-10-Universal-Design-Features.pdf)’ and on the [www.agefriendlyhomes.ie](http://www.agefriendlyhomes.ie) website.

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# UD Home and UD Home +

The Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland are provided in a two-tier system described as **UD Home**; optimising flexibility, adaptability and usability for everyone and **UD Home+**; providing for greater accommodation of people’s changing needs over time. The checklist includes a summary of guidelines for both the UD Home and UD Home+ levels that impact on the internal layout of a dwelling. For wheelchair liveable homes, UD Home+ guidelines should be applied. Residential developments incorporating Universal Design Homes should include both UD Home and UD Home+ dwellings.

Five example floor plans are provided with the checklist, to demonstrate the checklist being applied in both UD Home and UD Home+ dwellings:

* a UD Home 1-bedroom apartment
* a UD Home 2-bedroom apartment
* a UD Home+ 2-bedroom apartment
* a UD Home 3-bedroom 2-storey house
* a UD Home+ 2-bedroom single storey house

The example floor plans of the UD Home 1 and 2-bedroom apartments demonstrate that UD Home apartments can generally be achieved within the additional floor area that is already mandated in the Design Standards for New Apartments (Section 3.8, Safeguarding Higher Standards), for at least 50% of apartments in developments with ten or more apartments. There is therefore an opportunity within the mandatory increased target floor areas for apartments, to provide apartments in line with this internal layout checklist for Universal Design Homes.

The example floor plan of the UD Home+ 2-bedroom apartment demonstrates that the internal floor area of a UD Home+ 2-bedroom 3-person apartment is similar to the target floor area for a non-UD 2-bedroom 4-person apartment (73 sqm). This provides an opportunity for UD Home+ apartments of this type to be easily integrated into apartment developments.

The example floor plans of the UD Home 3-bedroom 2-storey house demonstrate that the Universal Design guidelines have a greater impact on internal floor area in multi-storey dwellings than in apartments, where the accommodation is typically all on one level.

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# Internal Layout Checklist for Universal Design Homes

Notes:

All of the guidelines included in this checklist should be achieved in the internal layout of a Universal Design Home, at the applicable level – UD Home or UD Home+.

Some guidelines may not be relevant to an individual dwelling unit and should be marked ‘n/a’ (not applicable) if that is the case. For example, the guidelines for stairs will not typically be relevant to apartments which have all accommodation on one level (no stairs).

This checklist should be used in conjunction with the more detailed guidance in the [Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland](https://www.universaldesign.ie/built-environment/housing/). The relevant section and page number in the guidelines giving more detailed guidance for each location in the home is provided in the checklist below.

## Checklist

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** (page no. in guidelines) | **Guideline Summary** | **UD Home** | **UD Home+** | **Check** |
| **Entrance Hallway** (Section 2, page 85) | Level access | Y | Y | Y |
| **Entrance Hallway** (Section 2, page 85) | Entrance door minimum effective clear width | 800mm | 850mm | Y |
| **Entrance Hallway** (Section 2, page 85) | Minimum clear space adjacent to entrance door | 1500mm x 1500mm | 1800mm x 1800mm | Y |
| **Entrance Hallway** (Section 2, page 85) | Space for storing outdoor wear | Y | Y, enclosed storage space | Y |

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corridors** (Section 2, page 87) | Minimum width between walls | 1050mm | 1200mm | Y |
| **Doors** (Section 2,page 87) | Minimum effective clear width of doors, straight on approach or right-angled approach via corridor at least 1100mm wide | 800mm | 850mm | Y |
| **Doors** (Section 2,page 87) | Minimum effective clear width of doors, right-angled approach via corridor less than 1100mm\*[[1]](#footnote-2) wide | 850mm | 850mm | Y |
| **Doors** (Section 2,page 87) | Minimum clear space beside the leading edge (on the pull side) of all doors at entrance level | 300mm | 300mm | Y |
| **Stairs** (Section 2, page 91) | Straight flights between landings, no tapered steps | Y | Y | Y / n/a |
| **Stairs** (Section 2, page 91) | Clear width between handrails | 900mm, with handrail on one side | 900mm with handrails both sides | Y / n/a |
| **Stairs** (Section 2, page 91) | Stairs rise and going | Rise max 175mm\*, going min. 280mm | Rise max. 175mm\*, going min. 300mm | Y / n/a |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stairs** (Section 2, page 91) | Top and bottom landing clear space minimum | n/a | 1200mm x 1200mm | Y / n/a |
| **Through-Floor lift** (Section 2, page 94) | 1000mm x 1500mm aperture in floor for future through-floor lift | Future lift space can be accessed from habitable rooms or circulation space | Lift space is accessed from circulation space (provide store on both floors of the right size for future conversion to a through floor lift) | Y / n/a |
| **Through-Floor lift** (Section 2, page 94) | Clear turning space minimum in front of future through-floor lift | 1500mm turning circle diameter or 1400mm x 1700mm ellipse | 1500mm turning circle diameter or 1400mm x 1700mm ellipse | Y / n/a |
| **Living spaces** (Section 3, page 99) | A living space at the same level as the entrance to the home. | Y | Y | Y |
| **Living spaces** (Section 3, page 99) | Location for a temporary bed space at entrance level (if no bedroom at entrance level) | Y | Bedroom at entry level | Y / n/a |
| **Living spaces** (Section 3, page 99) | Minimum clear turning circle diameter | 1500mm | 1800mm | Y |
| **Living spaces** (Section 3, page 99) | Minimum width of clear route between items & in front of windows and routes between doors | 750mm | 800mm | Y |
| **Dining area** (Section 3, page 101) | Minimum clear space for use and movement around the dining table | 1200mm on 2 consecutive sides of table, continuous | 1200mm on all sides of table, continuous | Y |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Kitchen** (Section 3, page 103) | Minimum space between work surfaces | 1200mm | 1500mm | Y |
| **Kitchen** (Section 3, page 103) | Minimum clear turning circle diameter | 1500mm | 1800mm | Y |
| **Kitchen** (Section 3, page 103) | All doors to the kitchen from habitable rooms are outside the main workspace. | Y | Y | Y |
| **Kitchen** (Section 3, page 103) | If the dining area is not in the same room, provide an occasional eating space in the kitchen | Y | Y | Y / n/a |
| **Bedroom** (Section 3, page 118) | Minimum size of double and twin bedrooms | 13sqm | 13sqm | Y |
| **Bedroom** (Section 3, page 118) | Minimum size of single bedrooms | 8sqm | 8sqm | Y / n/a |
| **Bedroom** (Section 3, page 118) | Minimum clear space both sides and end of double bed | 800mm | 800mm | Y |
| **Bedroom** (Section 3, page 118) | Minimum clear turning circle diameter in double bedroom | 1500mm | 1800mm | Y |
| **Bedroom** (Section 3, page 118) | Single bedroom – minimum clear space at side of single bed | 800mm | 1200mm | Y / n/a |
| **Bedroom** (Section 3, page 118) | Provide a bedroom at entry level | n/a | Y | Y / n/a |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Located immediately adjacent to main bedroom with a full height door or ‘soft spot’ between them for future installation of a door | Y | Y | Y |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Layout allows for the provision of either a bath or a shower | Y | n/a | Y/n/a |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Minimum internal dimensions | 2100mm x 2400mm | 2500mm x 2650mm | Y |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Minimum turning circle diameter with a 200mm overlap of the basin allowed | 1500mm | 1800mm | Y |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Outward opening door, preferably\* against a wall | Y | Y | Y |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Minimum activity space beside bath, if a bath is provided | 1100mm x 700mm | 1100mm x 700mm | Y / n/a |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Minimum transfer space at end of bath, if a bath is provided | 400mm | 400mm | Y / n/a |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Minimum size of level access shower area, if a shower is provided | n/a | 1100 x 1100mm | Y / n/a |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Basin minimum access space to front | 1100 x 700mm | 1100 x 700mm | Y |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Toilet minimum access space to front | 1100 x 700mm | 1100 x 700mm | Y |

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bathroom** (Section 3, page 121) | Toilet centreline from wall | 400-500mm | 400-500mm | Y |
| **Entry Level Toilet** (Section 3, page 116) | Minimum internal dimensions | 1500 x 1800mm | 1800 x 2000mm | Y / n/a |
| **Entry Level Toilet** (Section 3, page 116) | Outward opening door, preferably against a wall | Y | Y | Y / n/a |
| **Entry Level Toilet** (Section 3, page 116) | Basin minimum access space to front | 1100 x 700mm | 1100 x 700mm | Y / n/a |
| **Entry Level Toilet** (Section 3, page 116) | Toilet minimum access space to front (where space is restricted, the basin can overlap the toilet access space by 200mm) | 1100 x 700mm | 1100 x 700mm | Y / n/a |
| **Entry Level Toilet** (Section 3, page 116) | Toilet centreline from wall | 400-500mm | 400-500mm | Y / n/a |
| **Entry Level Toilet** (Section 3, page 116) | Install a level access shower in the entrance level toilet compartment to act as a second bathroom | Provide drainage point for future level access shower installation | Y | Y / n/a |
| **Storage** (Section 3, page 141) | Mixture of storage type (e.g. shallow cupboard / deep cupboard / storage room) | Y | Y | Y |

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Storage** (Section 3, page 141) | Cupboard Depth Range | 300 - 600mm | 300 - 600mm | Y |
| **Utility** (Section 3, page 141) | Separate utility space in homes of 3-bedrooms or more | Y | Y | Y / n/a |
| **Utility** (Section 3, page 141) | Laundry Clear Area (in front of units) | 1200mm | 1200mm | Y / n/a |
| **Study / work space** (Section 3, page 140) | Natural light to study / work space | Y | Y | Y |
| **Study / work space** (Section 3, page 140) | Study / work space length minimum | 1200mm\* | 1200mm\* | Y |
| **Study / work space** (Section 3, page 140) | Study / work space depth minimum (incl. chair space) | 1500mm | 1500mm | Y |
| **Private Open Space** (Section 3, page 145) | Minimum effective clear width of doors to private open space | 800mm | 850mm | Y |
| **Private Open Space** (Section 3, page 145) | Level access to private open space | Y | Y | Y |
| **Private Open Space** (Section 3, page 145) | Apartment balcony/terrace minimum depth | 1500mm | 1800mm | Y / n/a |

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# Example Floor Plans

## Figure 1 Example Floor Plan of UD Home 1-bedroom 2-person apartment

A floor plan of a one-bedroom, two-person UD Home apartment, with numbers on the plan at universal design features, as listed in the key below.

### Key

1. Clear space adjacent to the entrance door of minimum 1500mm x 1500mm.

2. Space for storing outdoor wear.

3. Clear effective door width of minimum 800mm.

4. Clear space beside the leading edge of doors of minimum 300mm.

5. Turning circle of minimum 1500mm clear diameter.

6. Continuous clear space of 1200mm to a minimum of two consecutive sides of a dining table.

7. Clear space of minimum 800mm on both sides and at the end of a double bed.

8. Soft spot for future door between bathroom and bedroom.

9. Bathroom located immediately adjacent to the main bedroom.

10. Toilet centreline between 400mm to 500mm from the wall.

11. Position of future shower adaptation.

12. Clear area of minimum 1200mm in front of units within a utility room.

13. Study / workspace of minimum length 1200mm and a minimum depth of 1500mm (including desk and chair space).

14. Level access to a balcony / terrace.

15. Balcony / terrace with a minimum depth of 1500mm.

### Table 1 Comparison with target floor areas in the Design Manual for Quality Housing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 Bed 2-Person Apartment | Gross Floor Area | Aggregate living area | Aggregate bedroom area | Storage | Private Amenity Space |
| Target | 45 sqm | 23 sqm | 11.4 sqm | 3 sqm | 5 sqm |
| UD Home 1B2P example | 50 sqm | 26 sqm | 13.2 sqm | 3 sqm | 5 sqm |

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## Figure 2 Example Floor Plan of UD Home 2-bedroom 4-person apartment

A floor plan of a two-bedroom, four-person UD Home apartment, with numbers on the plan at universal design features, as listed in the key below.

### Key

1. Clear space adjacent to the entrance door of minimum 1500mm x 1500mm.

2. Space for storing outdoor wear.

3. Clear effective door width of minimum 800mm.

4. Clear space beside the leading edge of doors of minimum 300mm.

5. Turning circle of minimum 1500mm clear diameter.

6. Continuous clear space of 1200mm to a minimum of two consecutive sides of a dining table.

7. Clear space of minimum 800mm on both sides and at the end of a double bed.

8. Clear space of minimum 800mm to the side of a single bed.

9. Bathroom located immediately adjacent to the main bedroom.

10. Soft spot for future door between bathroom and bedroom.

11. A level access shower.

12. Toilet centreline between 400mm to 500mm from the wall.

13. Study / work space of minimum length of 1200mm and depth of 1500mm (including desk and chair space).

14. Level access to a balcony / terrace.

15. Balcony / terrace with a minimum depth of 1500mm.

### Table 2 Comparison with target floor areas in the Design Manual for Quality Housing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2 Bed 4-Person Apartment | Gross Floor Area | Aggregate living area | Aggregate bedroom area | Storage | Private Amenity Space |
| Target | 73 sqm | 30 sqm | 25 sqm | 6 sqm | 7 sqm |
| UD Home 2B4P example | 82.4 sqm | 30 sqm | 26 sqm | 6 sqm | 7 sqm |

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## Figure 3 Example Floor Plan of UD Home+ 2-bedroom 3-person apartment

A floor plan of a two-bedroom, three-person UD Home+ apartment, with numbers on the plan at universal design features, as listed in the key below.

### Key

1. Clear space adjacent to the entrance door of minimum 1800mm x 1800mm.

2. Enclosed space for storing outdoor wear.

3. Clear effective door width of minimum 850mm.

4. Clear space beside the leading edge of doors of minimum 300mm.

5. Turning circle of minimum 1800mm clear diameter.

6. Continuous clear space of 1200mm to all sides of a dining table.

7. Clear space of minimum 800mm on both sides and at the end of a double bed.

8. Clear space of minimum 1200mm to the side of a single bed.

9. Bathroom located immediately adjacent to the main bedroom.

10. Soft spot for future door between bedroom and bathroom.

11. A level access shower of minimum 1100mm x 1100mm.

12. Toilet centreline between 400mm to 500mm from the wall.

13. Side transfer space beside a toilet.

14. Clear area of minimum 1200mm in front of unit within a utility room.

15. Study / work space of minimum length of 1200mm and depth of 1500mm (including desk and chair space).

16. Level access to a balcony / terrace.

17. Balcony / terrace with a minimum depth of 1800mm.

### Table 3 Comparison with target floor areas in the Design Manual for Quality Housing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2 Bed 3-Person Apartment | Gross Floor Area | Aggregate living area | Aggregate bedroom area | Storage | Private Amenity Space |
| Target | 63 sqm | 28 sqm | 20.1 sqm | 5 sqm | 6 sqm |
| UD Home+ 2B3P example | 73.68 sqm | 28 sqm | 21 sqm | 5.2 sqm | 6 sqm |

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## Figure 4 Example Ground and First Floor Plans of UD Home 3-bedroom 5-person House

Ground and first floor plans of a 3-bedroom, five-person, two-storey UD Home house, with numbers on the plan at universal design features, as listed in the key below.

### Key

1. Clear space adjacent to the entrance door of minimum 1500mm x 1500mm.

2. Space for storing outdoor wear.

3. Clear effective door width of minimum 800mm.

4. Clear effective door width of minimum 850mm with right-angled approach on corridor less than 1100mm wide.

5. Clear space beside the leading edge of doors of minimum 300mm.

6. Turning circle of minimum 1500mm clear diameter.

7. Continuous clear space of 1200mm to a minimum of two consecutive sides of a dining table.

8. Aperture for a future through-floor lift of 1000mmx 1500mm with 1500mm turning circle or 1400 x 1700mm ellipse turning space to front.

9. Temporary bedspace at ground floor level.

10. Clear space of minimum 800mm on both sides and at the end of a double bed.

11. Clear space of minimum 800mm to the side of a single bed.

12. Bathroom located immediately adjacent to the main bedroom.

13. Soft spot for future door between bathroom and bedroom.

14. Position of future shower adaptation.

15. Toilet centreline between 400mm to 500mm from the wall.

16. An entry level toilet with minimum dimensions of 1500mm x 1800mm.

17. A drainage point provided to an entry level toilet for future level access shower installation.

18. Clear area of minimum 1200mm in front of units within a utility room.

19. Study / workspace of minimum length 1200mm and of minimum depth 1500mm including chair space.

20. Level access to a private outdoor space.

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### Table 4 Comparison with target floor areas in the Design Manual for Quality Housing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 Bed 5-Person House (2-storey) | Gross Floor Area | Aggregate living area | Aggregate bedroom area | Storage |
| Target | 92 sqm | 34 sqm | 32 sqm | 5 sqm |
| UD Home 3B5P example | 109 sqm | 34.1 sqm | 35.4 sqm | 6.4 sqm |

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## Figure 5 Example Floor Plan of UD Home+ 2-bedroom 3-person House

A floor plan of a two-bedroom 3-person UD Home+ single storey house, with numbers on the plan at universal design features, as listed in the key below.

### Key

1. Clear space adjacent to the entrance door of minimum 1800mm x 1800mm.

2. Enclosed space for storing outdoor wear.

3. Clear effective door widths of minimum 850mm.

4. Clear space beside the leading edge of doors of minimum 300mm.

5. Turning circle of minimum 1800mm clear diameter.

6. Continuous clear space of 1200mm to all sides of a dining table.

7. Clear space of minimum 800mm on both sides and at the end of a double bed.

8. Clear space of minimum 1200mm to the side of a single bed.

9. Bathroom located immediately adjacent to the main bedroom.

10. Soft spot for future door between bedroom and bathroom.

11. A level access shower of minimum 1100mm x 1100mm.

12. Toilet centreline between 400mm to 500mm from the wall.

13. Side transfer space beside a toilet.

14. Study / work space of minimum length of 1200mm and depth of 1500mm (including desk and chair space).

15. Level access to garden / terrace.

### Table 5 Comparison with target floor areas in the Design Manual for Quality Housing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2 Bed 3-Person House | Gross Floor Area | Aggregate living area | Aggregate bedroom area | Storage |
| Target | 60 sqm | 28 sqm | 20 sqm | 3 sqm |
| UD Home+ 2B3P example | 70 sqm | 28.5 sqm | 21 sqm | 3.2 sqm |

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# References

[Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland](https://www.universaldesign.ie/built-environment/housing/)

[Ten Universal Design Features to include in a Lifetime Adaptable and Age Friendly Home](https://agefriendlyhomes.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/AFI-10-Universal-Design-Features.pdf)

[Dementia Friendly Dwellings for People with Dementia, their Families and Carers](https://www.universaldesign.ie/built-environment/housing/dementia-friendly-dwellings/)

[Design Manual for Quality Housing](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b3e02-design-manual-for-quality-housing/)

[Land Development Agency Apartment Typology Booklet](https://lda.ie/uploads/documents/LDA-Apartment-Typology-Booklet_Rev-00_Pages.pdf)

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[Age Friendly Ireland](https://agefriendlyireland.ie/) is a local government shared service hosted by Meath County Council that manages Age Friendly programmes and services. Our resources are developed in consultation with older citizens through Older People’s Councils structures established in every local authority area.

The [National Disability Authority](https://nda.ie/) is the independent statutory body that provides information and advice to government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. We assist the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in the co-ordination of disability policy. We also promote Universal Design through our [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](https://universaldesign.ie/home/).[page 19]

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1. A small number of items in this checklist have different values or guidance to that stated in the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland. These revised items are marked with an asterisk (\*). These revisions have been made to ensure compatibility with current construction practice and practicability considerations, following testing of the checklist by the National Age Friendly Technical Advisors Network and the Land Development Agency. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)